



VOTING INFORMATION NEWS

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) For voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

Slogan Contest Ends

Judges Announced

On July 6, 1999 the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) stopped accepting slogan entries for the 1999 Voting Slogan Contest. The Voting Slogan Contest is a biennial contest sponsored by the FVAP in its efforts to promote interest in the democratic process among citizens covered under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* -- members of the Uniformed Services, the Merchant Marine, their family members, and all U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. The winner of this year's slogan contest will be featured in the FVAP's 2000/2001 informational and motivational materials which focus on increasing voter awareness among U.S. citizens worldwide.

The FVAP feels that this year's contest accomplished its goal of promoting voter awareness because thousands of slogan entries were submitted. We also feel that the Voting Assistance Officer's (VAO) dedicated efforts in encouraging citizens to enter the contest helped generate the high participation rate and brought attention to the voting program. Citizens now have a better idea where to find guidance and assistance on absentee voting; either through their local voting assistance officer or if local assistance is not available, directly with our office.

With the first phase of the contest complete, it is now time to begin the next phase of the contest: the selection of the 1999 Voting Slogan winners. FVAP Director, Polli Brunelli, has just announced the panel (See **Slogan**, pg. 3)

Sign Up Today!

Become a Civilian Voting Assistance Officer

In preparation for the 1998 elections, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) established a formal network of volunteer Civilian Voting Assistance Officers (CVAO). As a model we followed the extensive Voting Assistance Officer's chain of command system in the Uniformed Services. The CVAO network was developed as part of our ongoing efforts to better serve citizens outside the United States in understanding how to participate in their democratic process and to motivate them to do so.

The initial coordination of the CVAO program was successful and many people around the world volunteered for this important duty. Beginning in 1998 through today, the volunteers in the CVAO program have provided guidance for citizens trying to vote absentee. The many citizens who have been assisted and voted indicates what great work CVAOs are doing around the world. It is a pleasure knowing that there are people who are willing to not only share their time, but go the extra mile to help others. Elections directly impact our daily lives and these volunteers realize the importance of the program. We would like to express our gratitude and congratulations to all CVAOs for a job well done. Because of your outstanding efforts many people were able to exercise their right to vote regardless of their location in the world; your support contributes significantly to our democratic process.

In our continuing efforts to expand the CVAO program to help reach further into the U.S. citizen communities overseas, we would like to invite anyone interested in

becoming a CVAO to volunteer now to prepare for next year's elections. If you are unfamiliar with the volunteer voting assistance program, here is a brief explanation.

The primary goal of a CVAO is to ensure that the American citizens residing outside the United States understand how to vote absentee and have the resources to do so. The FVAP provides each CVAO with a Voting Assistance Kit which contains guidance and resources to assist citizens with absentee voting. Resources include:

- Overseas Civilian Citizen's Voting Action Plan
- 2000/01 Voting Assistance Guide
- Federal Post Card Applications (FPCA)
- Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWAB)
- FVAP's Voting Information News Releases
- FVAP's *Voting Information News* Newsletter
- Other necessary materials

The CVAO's responsibilities will include:

Expanding citizen outreach within the local community to include direct contact with civic groups, American Chambers of Commerce, colleges and universities, and similar organizations.

Serving as coordinator for possible FVAP on-site or video teleconferencing workshops.

Planning and ensuring that overseas U.S. citizens are informed of current registration and voting procedures and the importance of participating in the democratic process. The voting outreach should begin 60 days before an election and be repeated during the week of Overseas Citizens Voters Week, September 3-9, 2000. (See **CVAO**, pg. 3)

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Please Note: If you experience difficulty when attempting to e-mail the FVAP or visit the FVAP Website, please use these temporary addresses or contact us by telephone or fax. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause.

E-mail: vote@fvap.ncr.gov
Website: www.fvap.ncr.gov

Stateside

Legislative Update - The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works with the legislatures of the states and territories to further facilitate the electoral process and help citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* to exercise their right to vote. The following is current information that may effect UOCAVA citizens.

Maine: The State of Maine allows registered voters to request absentee ballots by telephone. In this regard, the clerk is authorized to issue a ballot to a voter without receiving an application requesting a ballot when these procedures are followed.

The voter shall place a call to the clerk requesting an absentee ballot. Upon this request, the clerk will ask the voter for the information required on the application and will complete the application with the voter's information, except the voter's signature, and shall write "telephone request" on the application. The clerk shall then verify that it is the voter who is requesting the ballot by making the voter confirm the voter's residence and date of birth on the general register of voters. When this process is complete, the clerk will mail the ballot to the voter at the mailing address requested by the voter. The FVAP can provide the telephone numbers for your Maine local election official (clerk).

Alaska: Don't forget about the Alaska special statewide election being held on September 14, 1999. For more details see the "Stateside" section from the July issue of this newsletter or go to the website www.gov.state.ak.us/Itgov/elections and scroll to the Statewide Special Election Information heading.

What has the FVAP been up to?

The following is a legislative initiative suggested to states and territories that do not already have a law in place regarding Special/State Write-In Absentee Ballot. Currently twenty-five states provide a special or state write-in absentee ballot for all elections.

The purpose of this special/state write-in absentee ballot is to provide a method for voting by military and other persons overseas who, due to military contingencies or special circumstances such as those faced by submariners, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries or others in remote areas, will be out of communication for extended periods of time and unable to receive the regular absentee mail ballot during the normal time frame. A voter could request a special/state write-in absentee ballot 90 days in advance and write in the names of the candidates or party preferences.

(See *Stateside*, pg. 3)

Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month

[] Remind new arrivals in your area to notify their local election officials of their new mailing address because election materials are generally not forwarded in the mail. Mail delays are a major cause of disenfranchisement of UOCAVA citizens. The FPCA contains a small postage-paid perforated post card that can be used to request a mailing address change with the local election official in your voting residence state.

[] Have you requested a Voting Training Workshop in your area? If not, please determine if training is needed. If training is needed in your area, please contact Mr. John Godley or Ms. Sherri Morris of the FVAP (contact information listed below) for further information. A schedule is now being planned with training to begin this Fall.

[] If you are a new Voting Assistance Officer, review the on-line Training Workshop presentation for VAOs at the FVAP Website www.fvap.gov to obtain a brief orientation of the program. The information provided on-line supersedes the information previously provided on video tape and via FVAP training workshops.

[] Be sure to keep your voting continuity folder up-to-date by keeping all important voting information in the folder. You should place a copy of each Voting Information News newsletter in the folder. This will help to ensure your successor receives a quick orientation of his or her voting responsibilities upon your departure.

[] Check to be sure all persons you assist (including family members) are aware of upcoming elections in their state and that they have the necessary know-how and materials to participate. Please note, Kentucky, Louisiana and Mississippi have state elections scheduled this Fall which include Gubernatorial races (for more details refer to the April issue of this newsletter).

[] If you currently receive this newsletter and the FVAP news releases by mail and would prefer to receive them via e-mail please contact Mr. Matt Knefel (contact information listed below) or e-mail the FVAP at vote@fvap.gov to receive these materials electronically. On-line versions of the newsletter and newsreleases are also available on the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov.

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Voting Information News provides information for citizens and Voting Assistance Officers and is published monthly by the FVAP.

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Note: Copying or using VIN articles in other publications, etc. is encouraged.

(Stateside, from page 2) This special/state write-in absentee ballot should not be confused with the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) that is propositioned at Embassies and Consulates, military installations, overseas organizations and corporations. In comparison, the FWAB is generally only available to military stationed overseas and overseas citizens who have already applied for a regular state absentee ballot from the State or Territory. If the regular state absentee ballot does not arrive in sufficient time for the voter to return the voted ballot to meet the deadline, these voters may obtain, vote, and return the FWAB to the local election official.

It is also important to note that a special/state write-in absentee ballot usually provides a "full" slate of offices to be voted upon including Federal, state, and local offices. On the other hand, the FWAB generally allows voting for Federal offices only. There are presently five states that have expanded the use of the FWAB beyond Federal law. The 1995 revised FWAB was designed to accommodate its use beyond the general election and Federal offices only.

Follow links from the FVAP Website at www.fvap.gov for additional information regarding timely legislative news in your state which may affect your absentee voting process! ☞

(CVAO, from page 1) Conducting voter registration drives.

Ensuring in-hand delivery of FPCAs to U.S. citizens no later than September 7, 2000.



Informing the Director, FVAP, of the voter outreach efforts conducted during the election year.
Please let this office know if you or someone you know is interested in the CVAO program by completing the form on page 4 and returning it to the FVAP. We will forward the Voting Assistance Kit later this year when the materials have been prepared.
The FVAP is also utilizing technology to enhance voter outreach, making it possible to further inform, educate and broaden communication. In this regard, the FVAP is compiling a database of electronic communication information (web sites and email addresses) of CVAOs. This database will allow for more effective and efficient communication between our Program and the organizations and citizens with whom we work. Please provide your e-mail address when completing the form on page 4.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Sherri Morris directly during normal business hours, Eastern Time, or leave a recorded message during non-business hours. Assistance and information are also available through our Website at www.fvap.gov or e-mail at vote@fvap.gov. Formalizing the Civilian Voting Assistance Officer network is designed to further ensure enfranchisement of American citizens who are outside the United States and to bring more continuity in our voting assistance efforts. We hope to hear from you soon! ☞

(Slogan, from page 1) of independent judges who will review and choose the winning slogans based on their originality and motivational value. The five individuals who have cordially agreed to serve on the independent panel are:

- Senator Mitch McConnell, Chairman, Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
- Representative Bill Thomas, Chairman, Committee on House Administration
- Representative Patsy Takemoto Mink, House Committee on Government Reform
- Mr. Jim Bennett, President, National Association of Secretaries of State
- Mr. S. Murray Gaylord, Executive Vice President, The Advertising Council

**FVAP
Delivering
Slogans**



We want to thank all of you who entered the contest. We know that it will be a challenge for the Judges to pick the winners from all the thousands of slogans submitted, but in a way the FVAP feels that everyone who participated in the contest is a winner. The main reason the contest is held is to encourage interest and awareness about voting.

Again, we extend a special thank you for a job well done to all who helped make this year's contest such a success. We hope that everyone enjoyed the contest and the best of luck to all who entered! ☞

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